

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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HINCHEY ANNOUNCES NEARLY \$5 MILLION FOR PROJECTS IN BROOME AND TOMPKINS

WASHINGTON - The U.S. House of Representatives today passed the final version of the Transportation Appropriations bill that includes \$4.754 million for projects in Broome County and Tompkins County. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) placed most of these budget items in the bill, including \$2 million for a multi-purpose passenger transportation facility in downtown Binghamton and \$624,000 for a terminal in Ithaca.

"I am very pleased that the conference report we passed today includes funding for my priority requests," said Hinchey. "The hubs in Binghamton and Ithaca will bring tremendous benefits to these cities. The downtown areas will be revitalized and services will be improved. It will also greatly enhance the first impression people will have of the two cities, creating the potential for additional outside investment."

Passage of the conference report, the document that resolves differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill, is the final step before the president signs the bill into law. The Senate is expected to pass the conference report shortly.

The report contains \$2 million for the construction of a multi-purpose passenger transportation facility in Binghamton that will facilitate the transfer of passengers from the local bus and paratransit systems to the regional and intercity bus and rail systems. It will provide riders with safe and efficient transfers between different types of transportation as well as shelter from wind, rain and snow.

"The Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study identified the need for an intermodal transportation hub in downtown Binghamton as an important need in our regional transportation plan," said Steven Gayle, Executive Director of the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study. "Such a hub can also revitalize a portion of downtown Binghamton. We are extremely pleased that Congressman Hinchey has worked hard to secure funding for that project in the federal transportation appropriations bill. It demonstrates his recognition of the importance of using transportation investment to support not only the varied travel needs of the residents of the Binghamton metropolitan area, but also the economic development needs of the City of Binghamton."

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"The funding represents a significant commitment to a project that will coordinate and consolidate bus operations in our region and transform a pivotal section of downtown Binghamton," added Mayor Richard Bucci. "We can now move this creative project forward with detailed design and planning work. We appreciate Congressman Hinchey's ongoing efforts to secure the federal dollars that are critical to making the project a reality."

Hinchey also placed in the bill \$500,000 for Broome County Transit through the federal Jobs Access and Reverse Commute program. These funds will allow BC Transit to increase access to employment opportunities for residents of the South and West End corridors of the City of Binghamton.

In addition, Hinchey successfully requested \$624,000 to complete the necessary funding for the Ithaca downtown terminal. The center will consolidate and replace existing terminals at a central location and would provide capacity for offices and bus storage at the same location. Hinchey has secured a total of \$1,728,000 for the project in previous fiscal years, bringing the total to \$2,352,000. The FY '02 bill also contains \$1.5 million for Tompkins County for the replacement of buses.

"TCAT is very pleased to learn that Congressman Hinchey has been able to secure over \$2 million in federal funds for capital projects for the Tompkins County area," said Rod Ghearing, general manager of Tompkins County Area Transit. "These funds will help us to continue to modernize our fleet of buses with more accessible, lower emission vehicles and to complete the Downtown Transportation Center portion of the Cayuga Green Project."

Hinchey also secured \$130,000 for Tompkins County for the Vital Communities Initiative. This funding will be used to develop criteria to guide municipalities within Tompkins County in meeting countywide goals related to urban sprawl and high-density development, especially as it impacts transportation corridors.

"I am delighted to hear about the support for the County's Vital Communities Initiative," said Joan Jurkovich, Tompkins County's Acting Commissioner of Planning. "The Initiative's goal is to build a community consensus on how, where and what kind of development should occur in the future. This funding received through Representative Hinchey's office will greatly help us to continue to provide a forum to help the residents of Tompkins County develop the tools to realize their vision for the future."

"The Vital Communities Initiative is an exciting, innovative project that holds great promise for preserving and improving the quality of life for local residents," Hinchey added. "Tompkins County is an ideal setting for this pilot project."